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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
ACDA-12 HA-05 OMB-01 IO-13 TRSE-00 AID-05 /099 W
----------063153 281452Z /41
P R 281415Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7445
INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 1253

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, EC
SUBJECT: CONTINUING REACTION TO PRESIDENTIAL EXCLUSIONS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: GOE BANNED CONCENTRATION OF POPULAR FORCES (CFP) RALLY FEBRUARY 24 AND CFP CONVENTION NEXT DAY FAILED TO SHED LIGHT ON FUTHRE PLANS IN THE WAKE OF BUCARAM DISQUALIFICATION. AROSEMENA AND VELASCO FOLLOWERS ARE "NEGOTIATING" BUT SEEM UNLIKELY TO BE ABLE TO PLAY SERIOUS ELECTORAL ROLE.
END SUMMARY.

2. SIX DEMONSTRATORS WERE ARRESTED IN GUAYAQUIL THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 24 FOR PROTESTING THE EXCLUSION OF ASSAD BUCARAM FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. THE MILD DISTURBANCES OCCURRED FOLLOWING THE GOE'S DECISION TO REVOKE EARLIER PERMISSION FOR A DEMONSTRATION OF ASSAD BUCARAM'S CONCENTRATION OF POPULAR FORCES (CFP) POLITICAL PARTY.

3. THE NEXT DAY THE CFP CONVENED A NATIONAL CONVENTION FROM WHICH THERE HAD BEEN EXPECTED TO EMERGE A FIRM CLUE TO THE CFP'S FUTURE COURSE OF ACTION IN THE WAKE OF THE DISQUALIFICATION OF BUCARAM. INSTEAD, THE CONVENTION CONDEMNED THE ELECTORAL LAW, SCORED THE UNFAIRNESS OF THE PRESENT SITUATION, AND RATIFIED BUCARAM'S CANDIDACY.
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4. POLCOUNS SPOKE WITH CFP LEADER JAIME ROLDOS, BY PHONE THE AFTERNOON OF FEB 27. ROLDOS SAID THAT THE PARTY HOPES TO CONVINCE OTHER CANDIDATES TO WITHDRAW FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE IN ORDER TO PRESSURE THE GOE TO REVERSE ITS DECISION EXCLUDING BUCARAM, BUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A ROLDOS CANDIDACY, HE SAID, WAS STILL IN ABEYANCE AND WAS

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NOT BROUGHT UP IN THE CFP CONVENTION.

5. POLCOUNS ALSO SPOKE WITH CARLOS JULIO AROSEMENA ON FEB 27, ABOUT HIS FUTURE POLITICAL PLANS IN LIGHT OF HIS EXCLUSION FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE. AROSEMENA, WHO HAS BEEN TALKING HEATEDLY TO THE MEDIA BUT SHEDDING LITTLE LIGHT ON HIS INTENTIONS, SAID HE WAS ENGAGED IN TALKS WITH SEVERAL GROUPS, BUT HAD DECIDED ON NOTHING DEFINITE YET. THERE ARE RUMORS THAT AROSEMENA MAY USE HIS LEGALLY RECOGNIZED NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY PARTY AS A VEHICLE FOR THIS OR THAT MAVERICK ASPIRANT.

6. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY SEES NO POSSIBILITY THAT OTHER CANDIDATES WILL PREJUDICE THEIR OWN POSSIBILITIES BY WITHDRAWING IN PROTEST OVER THE BUCARAM EXCLUSION. AL-THOUGH THE CFP APPEARS COMMITTED AT THE MOMENT TO AN ATTEMPT TO REVERSE THE ANTI-BUCARAM PROVISION IN THE ELECTIONS LAW, WE EXPECT THAT THE PARTY WILL FIND AN ALTERNATE TACTIC WHEN THAT EFFORT FAILS. THE EMBASSY CAN FORESEE NO LIKELY SCENARIO IN WHICH THE GOE WILL REVERSE ITSELF ON BUCARAM.

7. WHILE BUCARAM STILL RETAINS CONSIDERABLE ELECTORAL PUNCH IN THE FORM OF HIS PERSONAL PRESENCE AND IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CFP, THE SAME CANNOT BE SAID OF EITHER THE AROSEMENISTAS OF VELASQUISTAS AT THIS MOMENT. THEY ARE CONFIDENTIAL

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EXPECTED TO JUMP ON ANY REASONABLE OPPORTUNITY TO RESCUE THEMSELVES FROM OBLIVION, BUT BUCARAM MAY YET PROVE TO BE HOLDING THE DECISIVE HAND IN THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE.
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